G Japanese annual events for teenagers

**Valentine’s day (February)**

We are going to introduce to you Japan's annual events, especially important days for high school students. First of all, let me introduce Japan’s Valentine’s Day. February 14th is one of the biggest events for us. In Japan the people who give presents are women, not men. On this day, Japanese girls are supposed to give chocolate to the boy(s) they love. In fact, this lovers' day accounts for a quarter of annual consumption of chocolate. Broadly speaking, three sorts of chocolates exist; for love, for duty and friendship; these are what we call honmei-choco, giri -choco, and tomo-choco in Japanese.

At first, Valentine’s Day was a day to confess our love to a boy with chocolate. However, now, women give chocolate to men whom they love, or their husbands. This is honmei-choco, meaning chocolate for love. Secondly, we also give chocolate to our superiors, colleagues and friends who happen to be boys. It is giri-choco, chocolate for duties. Finally, girls give chocolate to their friends of the same sex. That is tomo-choco, chocolate for friends.

Now, let’s look into giri-choco, a typical custom of modern Japan. The left graph shows that how many chocolate a woman buys for Valentine's Day. As you see, 33.5% women didn’t buy any chocolate for men with duty, however, the rest of 66.5% women bought more than one chocolate. 6.2% women bought over 11 chocolates. The right one shows that how much money a woman spends on per chocolate; according to this graph, below 500 yen is popular, but if you buy over 11 “500yen chocolate,” that's a big money.

There is an interesting graph which shows how much money a woman spends on a chocolate for love; it shows that 81.1% women buy a chocolate which costs more than 1000 yen, and those who buy one with below 1000 yen are just 13.2%. That may be because their loves are more special than others.

**White day (March)**

The next presentation is the White Day. Have you ever heard of the White Day? This is an event particular to Japan. This is a Japan’s new annual event held on March 14th, a month later than Valentine’s Day. A man gives a present to a woman, who gave chocolate to him on February 14th. A man needs to give a good return for chocolate usually with sweets such as chocolate, marshmallows, or cookies. These sweets have different messages. If you are given chocolate from a man on White day, it means he dislikes you.　Marshmallows mean "you are just one of his friends." Cookies mean “I love you, too”. However, this is one of lots of rumors. So, you should not worry even if you get chocolates or marshmallows. To tell the truth, we Japanese women prefer jewelries to sweets. Isn't this Tiffany ring gorgeous? Japan's common sense says that men should give women presents three times as expensive as his salary. Japanese men have a lot of money, I think. Do you understand White Day? I hope you will get jewelry on next White Day.

**Summer festival (July)**

Next, let me introduce events and things of summer. In summer, there are countless local festivals in Japan because almost every shrine celebrates its own origin and the deity of the shrine in summer. Some festivals are held over several days. Every festival has own characteristics. This is Hakata Yamakasa, one of our city’s festival and attract 100,000 tourists every summer.

**Yukata (July)**

Yukata is a Japanese summer garment. People in Yukata are a common sight at fireworks displays, and other summer events. Traditionally Yukata were mostly made of indigo-dyed cotton but today a wide variety of colors and designs are available. For instance, there are pink, blue, red, and yellow.

**Fireworks (July)**

Almost all the festivals have fireworks displays. Japanese fireworks are gaining popularity among show producers and event organizers around the world as a powerful component of their works.

**Festivals’ street stall (July)**

Dipping for goldfish, shaved ice with syrup on the top, cotton candy…Japanese festivals are so lively. These festivals make us realize the beginning of summer.

**Moon viewing (September)**

Speaking about the moon, the old Japanese thought that there lived a rabbit in the moon. I guess that’s because they watch the shadows in the moon as a rabbit. In fact, the shapes are craters. In addition, people believe that rabbits were making rice cake. I believed it until recently. There are many kinds of dumplings which are eaten at the moon viewing. They are offered with chesthuts, sweet potatos, and fruits. Looks delicious? Now, let’s eat the dumplings!

Dumplings’ shapes have many types. For example, Tokyo’s dumplings look round. I want to eat many kinds of dumplings if my wish will come true. Now, I’ll introduce to you the moon viewing in September . In this event, we display silver grass at the porch or near the window, eating dumplings and drinking. This custom is said to be originated in China.

By watching the moon, they believed that they can live without disease all year round! Now, though the story changes a little, the Japanese believe that they can be happy by setting up sweets dedicated to the rabbit on the moon in front of the entrance of their houses.